

On Stage



THE OFFICIAL NEWS MAGAZINE OF STAGECOACH HOLDINGS PLC

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STAGECOACH SUPPORTS AFRICA TRAINING SEE PAGE 4



INSIDE

**BUSINESS &
AFRICA
SPECIAL** _____ **P2-7**

**PARK & RIDE
FEATURE** _____ **P8-9**

BUSINESS _____ **P10**

PEOPLE _____ **P11**

SOCIAL _____ **P12**

CHARITY _____ **P13**

**LETTERS &
COMPETITION** _____ **P14**

YESTERYEAR _____ **P15**

PARK & RIDE - Centre Feature

**also in this issue.....
EAST LONDON AND OTHER
AFRICA NEWS**

BUSINESS

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

This year my Christmas message goes out to more of you than ever - there are now over 20,000 Stagecoach employees around the world, following the recent acquisitions of East London and Selkent in London, and our new North East colleagues in Cleveland, Darlington and Hull.

The Group's good wishes and thanks go out to all of you and your families.

A special message in this African Workshop issue for all Stagecoach employees in Africa. You all work very hard in often difficult circumstances and you are a great credit to Stagecoach and your countries.

Our African Workshop demonstrates the Group's commitment to developing its staff and management for the future and we shall be giving ever greater priority to training and development next year and in subsequent years.

Brian Souter

Executive Chairman



SAYE UPDATE

An announcement was made in the June edition of On Stage of the plan to introduce a Stagecoach PAYE share option plan by October. Presentations were made by two leading building societies to the ESOP Trustees in July. However, the Trustees unanimously decided that the current level of bonus on offer from the building societies was unattractive. Alternative ways to enhance the bonus payable from a SAYE share option plan are currently under investigation. The ESOP Trustees will consider the options at their meeting in December and it is hoped their proposals will be announced early in 1995.

Stagecoach Acquires Cleveland Transit

The recommended Offer made by Stagecoach to acquire the entire issued share capital of Cleveland Transit Ltd including subsidiary Kingston upon Hull City Transport Ltd, has been accepted.

Cleveland and Hull in the County of Cleveland and North Humberside principal activities is the operation of bus services in the urban areas of Middlesbrough, Stockton on Tees and Hull. There are currently approximately 700 staff and 250 buses and coaches.

Full story next issue.

HARTLEPOOL TRANSPORT UNDER OFFER - FURTHER DETAILS NEXT ISSUE

ON STAGE

Issue 15, December 1994

'On Stage' is edited by Janet Campbell of Stagecoach South on behalf of the Stagecoach Group, and is published four times a year in March, June, September and December.

Advertising connected directly or indirectly with Stagecoach is accepted. Charitable adverts will be included without charge; otherwise rates on request.

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APPOINTMENTS

MAQ ALIBHAI has been appointed Operations Manager, Chorley, with effect from 26 September. Maq joined Ribble in 1988 and has been Depot Supervisor at Blackburn since early 1993.

BARRY ARNOLD has been re-designated Operations Director Stagecoach East London, to more accurately reflect the responsibilities of the post.

NIGEL BARRETT has been re-designated District Operations Manager East at Stagecoach East London and is responsible for all operating matters at Romford, Barking and Leyton.

DARRYL BELLAMY has been promoted to Manager, Stagecoach Wellington. Darryl was formally the Operations Manager and is the Operations Director of the wider Stagecoach New Zealand Company. Darryl now has full management responsibility of the Stagecoach Wellington operation based in Kilbirnie.

COLIN BROWN has joined the staff at Head Office in Perth as Group Financial Accountant responsible for the consolidation of quarterly, half-yearly and annual accounts. He also takes over from Xavier Da Gama as Financial Controller for Stagecoach International Services, allowing Xavier to concentrate on PSV accounts.

ADRIENNE CARNEY has been promoted to Manager, Cityline Hutt Valley. Adrienne was the former Operations Manager and is now the overall Manager of the business.

MIKE CLAYTON has been appointed Finance Director of Stagecoach (North West) from November 1994. Mr Clayton was formerly Finance Director of Selkent and had previously held a number of senior positions within London Buses.

PETER DUFF, Engineering Director Stagecoach East London, has taken over line responsibility for all engineering matters and Engineering Managers will report directly to him.

TREVOR GILBERT, former Operations Manager, has been appointed Manager of City Auckland.

JOE HEHIR left United Counties after many successful years at Huntingdon, to take up the position of Depot Manager, Mansfield with East Midland.

HEZEKIAH KAMUNGE has been appointed Group Internal Auditor for Stagecoach International (Kenya) in March. Hezekiah previously worked for Deloitte & Touche for 7 years.

PAUL LYNCH has been re-designated District Operations Manager West and is responsible for all operating matters at Upton Park, Bow and Stratford.

IAN MARSON has been appointed Assistant Depot Manager at East Midland's Chesterfield depot with effect from 1 October. Ian started in the transport industry in 1978 as a Conductor with South Yorkshire PTE in Rotherham, progressing to driver. He joined East Midland in 1989 at Harworth Depot as a driver and was promoted to Traffic Controller at Worksop in March 1993.

PAUL SOUTHGATE has been appointed Managing Director of Selkent with effect from 1 October 1994. Mr Southgate, formerly Managing Director of Cumberland, previously held various positions in Stagecoach South and has worked for the Group and its predecessor Companies throughout his career.

GEORGE THUO has been appointed Chief Accountant for KBS Mombasa as from March 1994. He joins with a wealth of experience having worked for Deloitte & Touche for 6 years.

LES WARNEFORD has been appointed Managing Director, Cumberland with effect from 1 October 1994. Prior to joining Midland Red earlier this year, Mr Warneford was Managing Director of Grimsby-Cleethorpes and before that he had held a number of positions within the bus industry.

MIKE WESCOME recently joined Cumberland as Traffic Manager. Mike has experience in various companies, more recently with Greater Manchester Buses, Bournemouth Transport and Busways.

More New Buses For Malawi Cityline

The first two of a batch of ten new chassis have arrived in Blantyre for local bodying.

The chassis are E.R.F. Trailblazers with front mounted Gardner 6LXB naturally aspirated 10.45 litre engines rated at 160 bhp at 1850 rev/min. The transmission is ZF4 HP500 Ecomat fully automatic with integral retarder and is the 4 speed model, since these will be for urban operations in Blantyre. Suspension is the E.R.F. Velvet-ride full air suspension, with 4 airbags at the rear and 2 at the front. The rear axle is the Rockwell R160E with 4.33:1 differential. Before entering service, they will be fitted with a Romatic system 2000 road speed governor which will allow full power to be used

for carrying very high loadings but will limit the top speed to 60 kms/hour.

It is hoped that all ten will be on the road before Christmas and it is intended that these will signal an extension of OPO in Blantyre, replacing a similar number of the now aged Daimler CVG6 double-deckers.



BUSINESS



BAGS OF ROOM UP TOP!

The biggest event of the North East calendar took place on Sunday 18 September 1994. Involving a staggering 32,000 entrants, the Great North Run is probably the most famous of half marathons, and of course such a momentous event involves a considerable amount of logistical planning.

One of the major tasks of the event is the transportation of a huge amount of runners' baggage from the start of the race in Newcastle, to the finishing line in South Shields. Having won the contract, this job was the responsibility of Busways Travel Services. It took no less than a fleet of 28 double deckers to accomplish the task, comprising

fifteen Blue Bus vehicles, seven Sunderland Busways vehicles and six from Favourite Services.

Naturally, in an operation of this size, there is always the chance that something might go wrong, particularly when you have a convoy of 28 double deckers travelling at a snail's pace for twelve miles. With this in mind, a Busways' breakdown truck 'shadowed' the convoy on its slow course.

Thankfully though, it was never called into action, with the whole operation going without a single hitch.

Above: Waiting for the late runners!

G & G Travel Student Success

With the annual return of students to the University of Warwick, G & G Travel have come up trumps by winning the major share of the market. G & G have worked hard over the years to build up strong ties with the students and all the work and research has paid off as sales of Unicards (student travel card) have increased by over 25%. Area Manager South, Michael Payne said: "We have improved the frequency between the University and Coventry and have met the challenge by running punctually and treating the students with respect and courtesy. The results speak for themselves and I have every confidence in the future if all our challenges can be met in this way".

'Zippy Plus' Comes to Town

On 23 October 1994, Ribble introduced a new brand of service called 'Zippy Plus' to the Penwortham and Longridge areas of Preston. The services are operated with 'L' registered 40 seat Volvo B6R vehicles which are manned from a team of regular drivers that have undergone intensive Customer Care Training.

The brand name 'Zippy Plus' was used to maintain existing identity with the successful Penwortham 'Zippy' minibus network and coupled with the relaunch, service numbers were changed with the current service 108 to Penwortham being renumbered to 22 and the service 104 to Longridge being renumbered to 24.

From the same date, a 'new' off peak shopping facility was introduced to the service 24 which further improved the facilities on offer to Longridge customers since the original launch of the service during November 1993.

New Coventry Bus Station

Midland Red's new Centro bus station in Coventry has at last opened to the travelling public. The long overdue opening has attracted a lot of interest over the past two years, not all of it good. However, the general verdict from the passengers and operators alike, is that it is a superb bus station offering comfortable facilities in a safe, light and airy environment. The delay in the opening has meant that the temporary portakabin used to house Midland Red Travel Shop in the old bus station, became something of a standing joke with Travel Shop Supervisor Kath Dullaghan. Kath said: "We were moved into the portakabin for what should have been a few months, but which eventually became two years. Conditions were far from ideal as it was particularly cramped. We nicknamed it the hutch." Happily Kath has now moved to the brand new Travel Shop in the new bus station and when asked for her opinion, she beamed "We are all very pleased with it, business has really picked up and we shall be requesting another member of staff to cope with the increased business".



Above: Interior view of new Travel Shop

HITTING MOVING TARGETS

On-bus advertising is big business and selling the many different sites with their varying shapes and sizes is a specialist function. We asked Roger Fernley, Managing Director of British Transport Advertising to explain the relationship between his company and Stagecoach, highlighting the way in which BTA is working to increase advertising revenue for both companies. Read what Roger has to say:

Sainsbury, BT, Unilever and Dairy Crest are all big companies which have recently paid for advertising to be displayed on the sides of Stagecoach buses. In fact more and more well-known brands are considering taking advantage of the excellent audience penetration and cost efficiency offered by bus advertising. The bus advertising business is currently worth approximately £24 million a year and it is growing. British Transport Advertising (BTA) is the biggest contractor in the market and manages advertising rights on behalf of 116 bus fleets up and down the country, accounting for 55% of all buses.

Stagecoach and BTA

Our biggest bus sales contract is with Stagecoach. This exclusive group deal came into effect on 1 May 1994 and means that Stagecoach has and will grant the advertising sales concession on all its UK group companies to BTA. So far the advertising sales contracts of 15 Stagecoach group subsidiaries have been placed with BTA. Another 5 will follow suit when their existing arrangements expire. By April next year BTA will be selling ad space on the sides of more than 3200 Stagecoach vehicles.

The Business of BTA

As our name suggests, we are involved in all forms of transport advertising. We are the fourth largest contractor in the UK for "static" 48-sheet roadside billboards and speak for a 15% share in a market where the top four contractors control three-quarters of it. We also manage the vast majority of British Rail and Railtrack advertising concessions.

As a major player in outdoor advertising we are able to offer our customers the added advantage of being the only bus advertising contractor to maintain a full regional sales infrastructure outside London. There are BTA sales offices in Newcastle, Leeds, Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow and Aberdeen and these ensure that we maximise revenue from regional and local sales.

BTA is set on a growth path and we fully recognise the important responsibility placed on our shoulders by Stagecoach. Our relationship with Stagecoach - and indeed all our bus company clients - is

based on shared commitment, trust and integrity. We are determined to develop the bus advertising medium to benefit our clients and we are committed to service, flexibility and quality.

As an advertising medium, bus advertising offers a unique canvas on which ad agencies can display their work. Buses can also claim "to reach the parts others can't" as static roadside sites are often limited in the centre of town and cities due to planning bye-laws. But this is where buses come into their own, hitting customers on the move near shops and offices.

Driving forward with BUSworks

However, the people who plan and schedule bus-side ad campaigns sometimes complain at the enormity of the task given the various different regulations, fleets, shapes and sizes. To help agencies spend their money on bus advertising, BTA recently introduced BUSworks, the most advanced database for planning bus campaigns.

This software system, designed by BTA, contains vital fleet and panel information on every bus operator in the country (not just those represented by BTA). So its key benefit is that it allows ad campaign planners to schedule a complete national bus campaign in a single session on their own computers. Importantly the data is not only more extensive but also more accurate as it is town-based rather than depot-based, so giving an accurate picture of where buses actually travel, not simply where they sleep overnight.

Taking United Counties as an example, BUSworks can be used by BTA to discover quickly and easily which towns are served by the United Counties depots. We could then tell the advertiser, or its advertising agency, how many vehicles operate from each depot and from this information the optimum size of an advertising campaign can be automatically calculated. We can see from BUSworks that United Counties operates 289 buses from five depots covering 69 towns. We do not include the Company's coaches in the equation.

Bringing this kind of information together at one point makes planning a bus advertising campaign a great deal easier and therefore a more attractive option to advertisers and agencies. It is just one example of how BTA is investing in improving bus advertising to the benefit of our advertising and bus company clients alike.



Above: One of four United Counties Volvo B6 overall advertisement buses for Michael R Peters of Bedford. Each vehicle promotes a different aspect of the retailers business.

AFRICA SPECIAL

Inaugural Stagecoach Africa Workshop

Following the success of the Group management conference in the United Kingdom a similar format has been agreed for the African companies to allow management staff there the same opportunities as their British counterparts. Distance and cost, effectively restrict the number of potential delegates from Malawi and Kenya and whilst there has been tremendous benefit, even for the small numbers who have been able to attend, exposure to Group policy in all aspects of the operation and quality considerations by a much larger forum will, it is hoped, magnify that benefit exponentially.

Venue and dates have now been set, and the inaugural workshop is to take place at Club Makokola near Mangochi in Malawi, commencing on the evening of Saturday 10 December, finishing after lunch on Tuesday 13 December.

Club Makokola (more commonly known as Club Mak) is a resort hotel, privately owned, located on the southern shore of Lake Malawi. It boasts first-rate conference facilities and has considerable experience in this particular field of business activity. Twenty-two delegates from Kenya along with twenty-four from Malawi have already been scheduled to attend, along with the Group Managing Director, Ann Gloag, Director, Brian Cox, and Group Training Officer Bill Davies. For the first time since Stagecoach entered the African



Above: Blantyre & Zomba delegates (standing left to right): Victor Mauluka, Joyce Mpsa, John Kamanga, Rex Milundu, Clayton Zgambo, Catherine Chirwa, Michael Kamanga and Baxter Mazunda.

(Seated left to right): John Sefasi, Kingsley Majawa, John Bosco, Phiri, Bright Chikaonda and Mike Butao.

market, middle management from Kenya and Malawi will have the opportunity of meeting on a large scale to exchange views and compare notes on their respective operations. The delegates have been drawn from all disciplines within the two companies, and will participate in a full range of activities under the theme of "Being the Best - Profitability through Quality."

The task of organisation has fallen to Agnes Mwangi, Group Passenger Executive Kenya Bus, and Patrick Chikowi, Operations Manager (Central

and Northern Regions) Stagecoach Malawi, with assistance from Bill Davies in the United Kingdom, and they have been busy drafting programmes, organising accommodation, menus, transport arrangements amongst many other things down to the finest detail to ensure the workshop's success.

The Minister of Transport for Malawi, the Hon Dr Dennis Nkhwazi, has provisionally agreed to join the conferees on the evening of Sunday

11 December for dinner and to speak to the delegates thereafter.

Links between the two companies have been steadily growing over the past year with three monthly exchanges of managers regularly taking place. Both companies have their strengths and weaknesses and by accelerating a programme of continuing contact, it is hoped that management from Kenya and Malawi will find themselves better qualified to address any areas of weakness in order to further progress and raise quality standards within their respective company.

The workshop is therefore intended to take place annually, alternating between the two countries, and will certainly be a working exercise, requiring the fullest involvement of each delegate, and will enhance and complement already existing training programmes.



Above: Lilongwe and Mzuzu delegates (from left to right): Patrick Chikowi, Mahammed Fazili, Francis Chingwenembe, Ramsey Kagula and Rodrick Roka

MAJOR ACCIDENT REPAIR WORK TACKLED IN-HOUSE IN MALAWI

Stagecoach Malawi engineers have tackled some major jobs this year. An experimental ERF Trailblazer articulated bus, fitted with a Gardner 6LXCT 230 bhp engine and ZF Ecomat automatic gearbox proved to be too much to handle for one of its drivers, who rolled it, causing extensive body damage to both halves. It has now been repaired in-house, but fearing a repeat performance it was decided that bendi-buses were not for Malawi, so the turntable was removed, the chassis extended by one metre and it has emerged from our Lilongwe workshop as a 12 metre rigid. It is an unusual vehicle because, apart from its turbocharged engine (the other ERF's have Gardner LX13's), it has air suspension on the rear axle and leaf springs on the front.

The next big job arrived when a cyclist and a Land Rover collided in the path of one of the Plaxton coaches. The coach avoided the cyclist but left the road and rolled onto its side. Although extensively damaged, the structure did not collapse and happily there were no serious injuries. The various options of sending it back to the UK, flying out people to repair it, putting a local body on, scrapping etc, were tossed around before the decision was taken to dismantle to the bare frame, have the frame straightened and repaired by a local body repair company, and then rebuild it in-house. The Chichiri body staff have made tools for stretching the side panels, taken moulds from a sister coach to make a new fibreglass rear and imported a lot of parts from UK and South Africa. It now has a floor and is fully panelled, about to be glazed, is beginning to look like a coach again and should return to service by December.

They say accidents come in threes so while the coach rebuild was in progress, a Volvo Expressline bus left the road late one night at high speed. There was a concrete culvert at the very point that the bus "went bush" and the Volvo grew wings and flew over it, clearing it with the radiator, front axle, engine and gearbox. The rear axle connected with the culvert, parting company with the bus, which slid into the bush for another 50 metres. The rear suspension was scattered far and wide and the chassis bent. Luckily there were no serious injuries.



At the time of writing, the chassis has been repaired, the suspension and axle parts have arrived and are being fitted, after which the body will be rebuilt.

Left: Vehicles awaiting repair at Chichiri

Driver Training In Malawi

Stagecoach Malawi Ltd boasts the only PSV training school in the country. The school, located opposite the Chichiri Head Office on Kamuzu Highway, is responsible for all the company's driver, conductor and OPO needs, and with staff turnover being high, particularly amongst conductors, there is never a slack period. The school serves only the company's needs and does not offer any outside commercial training.

Seven members of staff are employed within the school, ably headed by Griffin Mlanje Chanza, the Training Officer, and Alfred Phillips, the Chief Driving Instructor. Available resources include seven training buses, three lecture rooms and an abundance of training aids, e.g. videos, manuals etc.

Unlike the United Kingdom, a potential PSV driver in Malawi has to have held an HGV licence for at least two years. This effectively narrows the potential pool of recruitment and Stagecoach is actively lobbying Government for changes in the law. Notwithstanding this, standards have to be high given the testing nature of the roads and climate, not to mention the vagaries of and poor standards of maintenance prevalent amongst many other road users!

A total of 600 drivers and 590 conductors and ticket-sellers are employed in Malawi. On average, 22 drivers are trained per month, each course lasting four weeks, and there is an overall success rate of 50%, with approximately half of the failure element being judged unsuitable prior to the test.

Conductor training levels tend to vary according to seasonal demand, but an

average year might see as many as 500 conductors passing through the school. Conductor courses last two weeks and a 95% success rate is achieved.

The rainy season in Malawi, which lasts from November/December to April, sees a considerable reduction in services as roads become impassable and patronage declines. Advantage is taken at this time to conduct defensive driving and customer relations courses, the latter including conductors, inspectors and front office staff. Both of these courses are again run by the training school, and will shortly, with the assistance of a senior instructor from the United Kingdom, be subject to review and upgrade. The school also runs stringent refresher course for drivers who may have been involved in accidents of a blameworthy nature or who have committed minor driving offences, as well as being responsible for upgrading crew drivers to one-person-operation.

At times when the demand for driver training is low and potential on-bus patronage is high, it is not unusual for training buses to be utilised within the operational fleet.



Above: Training staff and vehicles outside the school building at Chichiri, Blantyre

AFRICA SPECIAL

The Story Of Stagecoach Kenya Bus

Background

Following the construction of the Uganda Railway at the turn of the century, important functions were shifted from the port town of Mombasa to the new highland town of Nairobi. As a commercial centre, Nairobi grew fast and by 1930 the need for a motorised mode of public transport was evident. In February 1934 Overseas Motor Transport company of London started a bus service using 13 buses on 12 routes. The city then had a population of 50,000 compared to the present day estimate of 2.5 million. Two years later an urban service was also started in Mombasa with 4 buses. The companies traded as Kenya Bus Services Limited and KBS (Msa) Limited respectively.

Road transport grew rapidly after the second world war and so did the Urban areas. KBS increased the fleet and expanded the network to keep pace. In 1964 United Transport took over the management of Kenya Bus. Two years later the Municipal Council acquired 25% and 49% of shares in the Nairobi and Mombasa companies respectively. Franchise agreements were signed. The operation was profitable and expanded economically.

The oil crisis of 1972 however, disrupted this. Costs increased while fares, which had not been revised for over six years could not cope. The informal sector was flourishing with illegal competition setting in. A Presidential Decree in 1973 allowed "Matatu" (para-transit vehicle ferrying up to 25 passengers) to operate without licence. This hit KBS at the worst of times.

Competition grew at a time when the economic viability and future of bus operation was threatened. It was difficult to re-equip at the rate of demand growth thus leaving space for further competition. In 1986 the government launched a bus company to operate in competition with KBS. By this time, United Transport International resolved to pull out of passenger transport worldwide thus fleet replacement was suspended and a buyer for the companies sought. The Mombasa ferry services, then part of bus operation, were the first to be sold.

By November 1991, when Stagecoach bought United Transport's shareholding in Kenya Bus Services Limited, the Company was faced with an over-age shrinking fleet operating amidst rampant competition.

Stagecoach has since then managed to turn round the companies. For the past two and a half years the management has been consolidating and expanding operations throughout the two cities and has increased the total daily passengers carried by 25%. This has been achieved with only a 15% increase in vehicle requirements.

Engineering

Stagecoach Kenya Bus presently has a fleet of 302 in Nairobi and 63 in Mombasa. The fleet comprises Leyland Guy MK1, 2 and 3, DAF and ERF MK1 and 2. The average fleet age is 113 months and 90% are available for traffic use.

Since November 1991 a total of 66 new vehicles have been imported while re-conditioning helps maintain the older buses in a reasonable state until finances allow for further replacement. Few African governments can afford the cost of routine and periodic maintenance to keep roads in a stable long term condition. The Assistant Chief Engineer S Hamilton reports that "the biggest enemy to engineering is the poor condition of roads and high passenger loads." Passengers per bus per day average 1340 and

continue to grow with usage parts such that in a period the engineers have to fit 180 new and re-conditioned road springs, 270 pins and bushes, not to mention about 10 cracked or broken chassis to contend with. Within KBS depot the Unit shop reclaims parts ranging from quick release valves to Gardner engines. This shop repairs or reconditions an average of 8 engines and 20 gear boxes per period.

With intensive city operation usage of brake parts and tyres is high. For example, about 115 tyres per period are fitted. These are imported direct from Michelin. Tyres are retreaded in some cases up to 4 times. Though normal average kilometres per casing is 150,000, the highest encountered is 220,000.

Due to the high percentage of sulphur in Kenyan diesel fuel (up to 1.5%) the fuel injection shop is of particular interest. The fuel bay has only just been re-developed with 3 lanes and six pumps which issue 28,000 litres per day.

A storage facility for 360,000 litres is provided. Such stock levels have to be maintained to counter the sometimes volatile situation in fuel supply.

Before Stagecoach took over only 90 buses per night were washed. Following the construction of a borehole and revised parking and bus movement within the depot, 280 buses are washed with the same number of staff.

Traffic

With a daily run out of 270 buses in Nairobi and 56 in Mombasa, an extensive network is offered in both cities. The main line services offer cross-city links on high frequency. This provides a competitive advantage.

In Nairobi, the KBS market share has improved from 43% to 51%. The main strategy has been to consolidate operation in identified stronghold areas - mainly the highly populated poor housing estates. With Nairobi's annual growth rate estimated at 4%, the least KBS can do is to ensure a corresponding increase in capacity to maintain market share.

Demand though growing steadily is rather peaky. With peak hour average speeds of 17 kph in the direction of the peak flow, it is becoming increasingly difficult to make maximum utilisation of vehicle capacity during peaks. There is as yet no infrastructure provided to give priority to public transport.

The cost of living has escalated over the recent years thus eroding the public's spending power. Since most passengers are from the lower income bracket fare levels cannot easily be increased to be in line with cost trends. KBS has to be efficient at low fares. The current average fare is 9.84 Kenya Shillings which is equivalent to 14 Pence.

KBS operates alongside 2600 matatus, who offer a demand responsive service, and Nyayo Bus Services (a government-owned corporation). Most of the route planning and research is initiated by ourselves while the competition follows. This sometimes leads to very wasteful competition. No regulation of public transport is in force and traffic law enforcement is lax, thus very poor traffic management.

For revenue integrity, second conductors are utilised during peak on the high density routes. Checks are in place to evaluate the economic benefit of the second conductor. A norm of at least 17% gain in shift revenue is set.

In Nairobi, the 302 buses are operated from the same depot. To improve on accountability most functions have been

Delegates from Mombasa also featuring one of the ERFs in Mombasa. George Thuo (Left) Herbert Awiti (right)



split into three companies (operational areas). An Area Manager and Assistant Engineer for each company are in charge of traffic and engineering, respectively. This division has enhanced team spirit as staff identify with their units and creates a competitive atmosphere.

Opportunities to develop business are being carefully monitored. Competition is researched and operational information analysed to ensure efficiency. The Management Information System is fast and tailor-made for the organisation. This allows for fast decision making and implementation - a prerequisite in a competitive market.

Finance

On the Finance side significant turbulence has been experienced during the last two years. For example, the exchange rate for the Kenya Shilling to the Sterling Pound went down from 120 to its current level of 68. The interest rates have moved from 34% to 21% while duties and Bank charge rates have been fluctuating wildly. It is worth mentioning that as a foreign owned company we were not allowed to borrow on the local market until February of this year when restrictions on local borrowing by foreign owned companies were removed.

Despite having these and other factors mentioned earlier to contend with, the Company ended 1993/94, with a return before interest of 15.8% and is looking forward hopefully to similar success in 1994/95.

Employees

The current staff strength is 2891. 70% are bus crew, 17% engineering while operational, finance and management personnel make up 13%. Though turnover is high (3% per month) among the road crew, other cadre are made up of staff with more than 10 years experience which illustrates commitment to company success.

Welfare

Stagecoach Boxing Club in their first appearance in the Nairobi Province Amateur Boxing Association (NBA) competition recorded a resounding win on Saturday 22 October. This newly formed club was led to victory under the watchful eye of former Commonwealth Games Bronze Medalist Raphael Mudise - the forklift driver at Nairobi's Eastleigh depot. Both club Chairman John Gibb and team Manager John Ovolla expressed their delight that the club had started their life in club boxing with a victory. The pre-season friendly against the experienced Bangladesh club was won with 9 bouts to 4. The young and inexperienced team will now compete in more pre-season matches before joining the Nairobi league of the Kenya ABA where no doubt they will rise to greater achievements. Well done lads!

Meanwhile from Stagecoach Football club, the Secretary Mr Charles Niptoo reports that the 1994 Nairobi Province super League ended on Sunday 23 October 1994. Though the official league standings are yet to be released, Stagecoach FC has managed to remain in the league for the next season, due to commence in January, 1995. Congratulations to the team as they break for recess and Christmas holidays. We also wish them success in the next season as they strive to go through to National Super League.

The staff Medical Centre has been refurbished and re-organised to offer an improved service and longer opening hours. Work has just started on the first purpose built staff canteen for KBS Nairobi.

Future

KBS will continue to seek improvements in its operations and working practices. Manpower training and staff motivation are seen as the key to ensured increased performance. A team of 18 middle managers have been selected to attend a Stagecoach Africa workshop to be held in Malawi in December. This is over and above the normal in-house training organised in the Company's training school.

In 1993, 49 ERF Trail buses entered service. During the year 1994/95 an additional 60 are planned, fifty of which will be 12 metres long, the first six of these have now entered service. They are the first in KBS to feature ZF 4JP 500 automatic transmission with an integral retarder. KBS needed special government dispensation to operate 12 metre buses.

An order of 10 Tri-axle Dennis Dragon double decker with Metsec Bodies has been placed for early 1995. These buses though not the first double deckers in Kenya will be the first in service since the 1960s.

Stagecoach has now become familiar to Kenyans. They identify it with commitment and improved standards. As we strive to improve, the expectations of our customers are also changing, which clearly illustrates that we have to be innovative. KBS envisages expanding into inter-urban operation by May 1995. The challenge will be to set pace in this new field while maintaining and improving the Urban operation.

Plans are at an advanced stage for a second depot to cater for the expanding fleet. Work will start early in 1995 with the depot targeted to be operational later the same year.

In Mombasa, successful operation of the business has not yet been on the level of Nairobi. Plans are under way to provide six new buses while experimenting on OPO (one person operation) - a totally new concept in Kenya. Service reliability is also being improved.

AFRICA SPECIAL



FIVE YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENT AND INNOVATION IN MALAWI

Stagecoach came to Malawi in April 1989, taking over the existing United Transport operation with the purchase of its 51% shareholding. With an ageing and mixed fleet operating within a difficult and often adverse infrastructure and climate, the operating environment in general was at almost total variance to anything that Stagecoach had experienced up to that time. Whilst the contrast between UK based operations and Africa still remains marked, experience, determination and not a little investment have all served to bring about vastly improved performance and quality standards which will serve as a solid foundation for the future.



Stagecoach Malawi is a truly national company which operates the length and breadth of a country of some 48,000 square miles (slightly smaller than England), being 522 miles long and just under 100 miles wide at its widest point. It is totally land-locked, bounded by Tanzania in the North, Zambia in the West, and Mozambique to the East and South. Lakes account for around 20% of the total surface area, the most prominent of which is Lake Malawi, the third largest lake in Africa and the fourth deepest in the world.

The operation is split between five brands: Cityline caters for urban traffic in the capital City Lilongwe, the country's commercial centre in Blantyre and the Northern Region city of Mzuzu; Country operate stage by stage to the more remote rural areas of Malawi which are usually only accessed via dirt roads; Intercity performs a similar role to Country, linking the larger towns and cities stage by stage on tarmaced roads, as well as carrying, by trailer, light freight (which pre-dates Pegasus by some 15 years); Expressline links the major towns and cities on a limited stop basis; Coachline, the flagship service, offers luxury steward service between Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu.

In addition to these, Stagecoach is gradually expanding its international operation with a thrice-weekly Express service from Blantyre to Harare (375 miles) and twice weekly from Lilongwe to Dar-es-Salaam (1004 miles). From

21 October 1994, the Expressline service to Harare has been supplemented by a further three-times a week Coachline operation.

All brands are subject to constant scrutiny in terms of performance and efficiency and have benefited by extensive fleet replacement and quality improvement programmes. Since 1989:



- Fleet size has increased by 46% from 240 to 360 buses and coaches;
- No fewer than 211 buses, representing 60% of the fleet, have been introduced to the fleet;
- Miles operated have increased by 20% from 15.5 to 18.6 million;
- Engineering and safety standards have improved dramatically. For example, the level of on the road breakdown has decreased by over 35%;
- Major depot refurbishment and improvement has been carried out, the most recent of which is nearing completion at Mzuzu;
- OPO has been successfully introduced on Express and Cityline services;
- Training activities have increased in line with requirements, with emphasis being placed on defensive driving, customer care and engineering excellence;
- An ESOP scheme (representing 15% of the company's shareholding) has been implemented.

Malawi, it must be remembered, is not a wealthy country, with over 60% of its population existing below the poverty line. The Balcraig Foundation, set up by Ann Gloag, is highly active in areas of relief and charity, and has already provided a fully equipped Burns Unit to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Blantyre (the first of its kind in the country) as well as assisting, in conjunction with Stagecoach Malawi, in times of drought and famine.

Stagecoach's achievement so far is a tribute to all of its 2,500 staff in Malawi and, with what has been achieved so far, it believes that it can face the challenges of increasing competition, a weakening of local currency and further expansion and innovation with the greatest of confidence.

Mzuzu Depot Refurbishment Nears Completion

The major depot serving Malawi's Northern Region's operations at Mzuzu has undergone a major face lift over the past nine months. Mzuzu, some 515 miles away from the Head Office in Blantyre, houses 36 buses which serve some of the most remote areas of the country, in often difficult conditions.

Prior to work commencing, the yard was primarily dirt, which turned to dust in the hot season and mud in the rainy season. All buildings were of corrugated iron and were the cause of extreme discomfort to staff at temperature extremes, as well as being subject to infestation by all manner of African insect life. Now the depot boasts a substantially revived engineering facility, a fully concreted yard, new brick built traffic and parcels offices, as well as drivers' rest-room with showers and toilets, new fuelling facilities and, the final touch, a new brick built security wall is currently being constructed to surround the premises.

All of the work was undertaken in-house under the watchful eyes of Operations Engineer, Vincent Barrow and Regional Superintendent, Duncan Siliva, and the completed project is a credit to Building Foreman, Gray Masauko and his team.



Above: Before and after completion of the traffic and parcels offices.

Blantyre to Harare Coachline Launched - at Last!

Notwithstanding the report in September On Stage, the intended launch of the Blantyre to Harare Coachline service had unfortunately to be postponed as a result of some difficulties with vehicle availability as well as problems with security in Mozambique. With the latter situation stabilising, and after a good deal of blood, sweat and tears shed by the engineering staff at Chichiri, the service was eventually launched at a formal reception held at Blantyre's Mount Soche Hotel on Thursday, 20 October, with the first departure taking place from the same venue the following morning at 0730.

The task of organising the reception fell to National Brands Superintendent, Jesse Wandawanda, MD's secretary Iris Griffiths, and Marketing Officer Patrick Chibwana, who worked very hard to ensure the evening passed without a hitch, despite the best efforts of ESCOM (the Malawian electricity company), who livened the evening up with several short power cuts. The greatest cheer of the evening was in fact heard when ESCOM contrived to switch off power as Managing Director John Gould was about to draw breath to commence his speech of welcome to the assembled guests. This happily proved to be only a brief remission and candlelight speeches from him and guest of honour the Hon Dr Dennis Nkhwazi, the recently appointed Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, were avoided.

In his speech, John Gould spoke of Stagecoach's ongoing commitment to quality in Malawi and described the company's achievements since its purchase of the company in 1989. He



Above: Before the departure, (from left to right): Patrick Chibwana, Tony Gates, Iris Griffiths, Jesse Wandawanda, John Makina and Patrick Chikowi.

paid tribute to all of the staff at Stagecoach Malawi stating that the company's progress would not have been possible without their hard work and vital contribution.

In reply, Dr Nkhwazi congratulated Stagecoach for its initiative and called on other operators to follow its example as well as complimenting its efforts on less profitable rural services to ensure that every village, particularly in the more remote areas, has access to a bus. On his part, he undertook to strive to improve road conditions throughout the country to open the way for improved communications.

After being presented with his own "fleet" of buses in the form of the Corgi set of three model buses, the Minister cut the ribbon to symbolically launch the service.

The following morning saw the service depart amidst balloons and gifts for the first five passengers and were individually welcomed aboard by the MD. Fears of the service being held up at customs points proved unfounded as it arrived without incident 40 minutes early in Harare and one hour early in Blantyre on its return journey the next day. The hard work put in by Jesse Wandawanda, Operations Director, John Makina, and Operations Engineer Tony Gates, certainly paid off.

East London - A Capital First For Stagecoach Group



The East London Bus and Coach Company Limited joined the Stagecoach family on Tuesday, 6 September 1994.

Stagecoach purchased East London from London Transport as part of the privatisation programme of all 10 London Buses subsidiary companies.

Bus operation in East London has a long and distinguished history originating from the dominant London General Omnibus Company and a number of Tramway undertakings - West Ham, East Ham, Ilford, Barking, Leyton, Walthamstow and London County Council, which operated a dense network of bus and tram services until the formation of London Transport in 1933.

This continued until 1989 when the buses were divided into 13 subsidiary companies under the Holding Company, London Buses Limited. East London was one of these companies serving the West End, City of London, Docklands, Stratford, Ilford, Barking, Dagenham and Romford. The purpose of dividing London Buses into these subsidiary companies was to prepare them for privatisation and deregulation.

Whilst bus services outside London were deregulated, (that means that bus companies could operate services at whatever times and fares they pleased), London continued to be regulated by London Transport who continued to set the specification for bus services, timetables and fares. To encourage competition, London Transport began to offer bus services throughout London for competitive tender. This certainly had the effect of reducing costs in the London Buses Subsidiary



Companies as they began to realise that in order to hold on to their business they had to be as efficient as their private sector colleagues.

In 1991 one of the Subsidiary Companies, London Forest Travel Limited, ceased trading due to the loss of a large number of tendered bus routes and East London acquired a number of buses at that time. As competition for bus route tenders increased so East London was determined to reduce its costs further and closed garages at West Ham and Seven Kings but opened a new low cost Midibus base at Stratford - all to save the cost of expensive overheads and remain competitive.

Today East London is a strong company, employing 1900 staff, owning 600 buses, operating from 6 garages, covering 21 million miles, carrying 120 million passengers per

year. However, the company cannot afford to be complacent, as the bus route tendering process continues apace. London Transport have set very strict quality targets in terms of bus service mileage to be run, timekeeping, cleanliness of buses, courtesy of staff and engineering standards. If the company fails in one or more of these elements, warnings can be given, and it is possible to lose contracts through poor performance.

It has been decided to keep the fleet colour red and the trading name - Stagecoach East London - will be displayed in white on the two sides and rear of each bus. Traditional Routemaster buses will have the old style cream band and the Stagecoach East London name in large gold letters on both sides of the bus to preserve its special appeal to the many foreign tourists who come to Central London each year. These tourists provide good business for the company and look forward to travelling on Routemasters to the popular tourist destinations such as Oxford Street, Piccadilly Circus, Trafalgar Square, St Pauls and The Tower. Most of our conductors carry a little card with useful phrases in different languages to help provide a better service by answering passengers' questions.

The Company serve a population of 1 million people in a very varied environment. The larger towns such as Ilford, Romford and Stratford support a traditional network of services for work, shopping and leisure. Whilst the Underground and British Rail services provide frequent rail services to and from Central London, we provide long established North/South links not served by rail in areas such as East Ham, West Ham, Hackney, Leyton and Walthamstow. In addition to all of this we have developed new networks in the exciting Docklands area, particularly serving Canary Wharf and the Royal Docks.

East London has been very innovative and has been involved in the development of low-floor buses.

Although the Company has undertaken many changes over the years to reduce costs it still is continuing to search for ways of improving its financial performance in order to win bus route tenders and provide funds for investment in new buses.

**Next Issue.....Stagecoach
Selkent**

Training Initiatives For Malawi Engineers

Stagecoach Malawi engineers have had recent training visits from Volvo and Z.F. (South Africa).

Norman Thomas from Volvo spent 2 weeks at Chichiri Central Works and trained 54 staff using 1 and 1.5 days training modules. Subjects covered were; air systems, electrics, inspection and servicing, engine strip and build, clutch replacement and adjustment.

Stagecoach Malawi operates 27 Volvo B10Ms, 7 of which are air-conditioned Plaxton coaches, and the remaining 20 are locally bodied automatic transmission Expressline buses.

Warwick Jones from Z.F. South Africa, spent one week at Chichiri Central Works and trained 41 staff in maintenance and fault finding on the ZF HP500 Ecomat Volvo, Dennis and ERF chassis, with a further 10 automatic ERFs shortly to enter service. The Dennis Dragons have covered in excess of 350,000 kilometres each since their introduction in early 1993.

Kim Neale from Sutrak Air-conditioning will spend 2 weeks in October/November training staff in service and repair of the air-conditioning systems fitted to the 7 Plaxton coaches. With ambient temperatures in the high 20's, sometimes into the 30's, the air-conditioning works continuously and a 10 hours journey to Harare, or a 7 hour journey to Mzuzu, can get a little sticky without it.

Initial feedback from the Volvo and ZF training is encouraging and annual follow-up/refresher courses will be arranged, as already done with Garner engines.

The Dawn of a New Depot in Malawi

The town of Mchinji in Central Region is the last town before the Malawi/Zambia border on the main road from Lilongwe to Lusaka. Bus traffic between Lilongwe and Mchinji is heavy with full standing loads and roof racks stacked with bicycles, furniture, sacks of maize, sugar etc. Mchinji has been a sleep-out point for several years and a plot has now been obtained, leased from the local Council. The plot has been levelled and graded and is now being fenced, prior to electricity and water supplies being installed.

There is a small building on site which will act as a temporary depot office. Longer term, there are plans for a small workshop, washbay and drivers' rest house.

Stagecoach Wellington's New Uniform

It's goodbye to the old and welcome the new! Bus Operator Mat Mahima models the new Stagecoach driver's uniform. The new uniform has been well received by staff and customers alike and really improves the Company image. Wellington has had the same grey and maroon uniforms for many years and the new colours of navy and white are a welcome change.



New Vehicles for Stagecoach Wellington

Stagecoach Wellington has recently taken delivery of its first M.A.N. 11.190 - fleet number 501, the first bus of 80 on order to join the Wellington fleet.

The new midi buses seat 39 passengers, as against 40 on the buses they will replace, but are significantly shorter and lower and slightly less wide. The smaller dimensions make the new buses more manoeuvrable and should make for much less accident damage in Wellington's challenging driving environment.

FEATURE

Stagecoach Takes

- **Park and ride schemes are the key to matching the ease of parking at green field shopping developments with the attractiveness of the traditional City centres.**
- **They bring wider environmental benefits as fewer green field sites are destroyed.**
- **City centres remain vibrant and open rather than vandalised with closed shops.**
- **Car usage is reduced, with shorter journeys to local centres.**
- **Bus usage provides quicker journey times to a wide variety of shops.**
- **Helps keep communities alive.**
- **Can help make bus travel an acceptable alternative to the car.**

CANTERBURY

By Russell MacDonald, General Manager North, Stagecoach East Kent

Canterbury is, like Winchester, a great Cathedral City, "blessed" with a road system which for centuries struggled to handle the demands of commercialised religion - the world of St. Thomas Becket and Chaucer's Pilgrims. It must struggle the more to handle its modern counterpart - a form of religion viz shopping trade and the commuter trudge. The very success of the City's attractiveness threatens that very success and, no, this is not double Dutch. Choking traffic has made access inaccessible. The growth of green field shopping malls such as Hemstead Valley, 25 miles west of Canterbury along the M2, proffers a world of free parking and futuristic facilities. The theory behind Park and Ride is to offer parking outside the City whilst making it easy to enjoy a wide variety of shops within a historic environment rather than forcing customers away to the green fields.

The groundswell of public and environmental thinking has been behind preserving historic town centres while pushing shops to the green field sites. This was bad news for traditional traders, the bus user and the car driver. Well designed park and ride systems can be the key to the future allowing the best of both worlds. Shops can stay in the City centres and not become museum pieces, green field sites are preserved, while under-utilised and waste sites just outside town can be developed for park and ride car parks. The traffic-free high streets become a living rather than a merely preserved heritage.

Canterbury has been ahead of the pack in its determination to match the quality of the green field shopping mall with the quality of its park and ride/traditional City centre alternative. Its embryonic mid-1980's beginning with 1 bus and a few hundred passengers on Saturdays only had, by last December, reached 6,000 passenger single trips per Saturday on 4 buses with 2,000-3,000 per day on 3 buses during the week, travelling from Sturry Road.

The cross-town operation which opened on 1 October this year (three years precisely after the start of phase 1) found 7 buses and a 7 minute frequency carrying, on that first day, 7,150 passengers, with nearly 3,000 from the newly opened Wincheap site, i.e., about 65% as well used as the Sturry Road site. The weekdays saw a 5 vehicle, 10 minute frequency employed and the proportion of passengers using the two sites in the first full week of expanded operation saw about 55% as many people using Wincheap as were using Sturry Road. It has to be said that Wincheap was given a boost by its running free of charge for the first week, while Sturry Road remained priced at £1.00 per car (up to 7 passengers including the driver). However, levels were, by early November, at 40% of those of the Sturry Road site and, as Christmas approaches, with Wincheap being ideally placed to accommodate drivers from Ashford, Dover and Folkestone, the maximum total passenger loads on the two sites could approach 12,000 on a Saturday, with 3,000 cars taken off the city's inner ring road, split evenly between the two routes.



Above: Canterbury's Lord Mayor ready for the off at the opening ceremony for Wincheap on 1 October 1994.

Right: The Winchester Park and Ride vehicles festooned for the occasion.

Left: Fatima Whitbread performs the opening ceremony with Alan Lloyd, Chairman of Planning and Transportation, Winchester County Council lending a hand.

Below: Pay and Display for the Winchester Scheme.



FEATURE

Pride in Park & Ride

WINCHESTER

by Jeremy Hooper, General Manager, Stagecoach Hampshire Bus

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS

My earliest recollections of Winchester are back in the early 1960's when, as a child, I would be taken past the city on the by-pass as we sped towards the south coast on our annual bucket and spade holiday. We probably did speed past in those days, but in more recent years Winchester has been synonymous with the M3 Twyford Down extension and traffic bottleneck. Today's south coast travellers often drive through the city either to wonder at the ancient streets, or more likely to avoid the queues on the more modern streets. In so doing, Winchester City centre often becomes gridlocked.

FATIMA WHITBREAD OPENS NEW PARK AND RIDE

The M3 extension will open shortly, despite the best efforts of the protesters, and this no doubt will help Winchester's traffic. What will also help is the recently opened Park & Ride system. Talked about for years, it began to take shape earlier this year and become reality when on Saturday 17 September 1994, Fatima Whitbread cut the ribbon (with scissors, not her javelin) and declared Winchester Park & Ride open for business. Four Volvo B6s, with updated specification bodywork by Alexander, operate on the Hampshire County Council tendered service, which runs every ten minutes, Monday to Friday peak times and all day Saturday, and every 15 minutes Monday to Friday off-peak. The service started in full on Monday 19 September, but on that Saturday all four vehicles provided free runs around the city, with Fatima on several journeys handing out balloons and signing autographs.

PUBLIC REACTION ENCOURAGING

Public reaction so far has been encouraging and within two weeks the car parks, with capacity for 330 cars, were up to 50% occupied. Saturday is the busiest day, but as the days pass more and more motorists are forsaking their cars for our modern, clean and environmentally friendly buses.

"WELCOME HOST"

A team of dedicated drivers was recruited for the service; virtually all of them new to bus driving. Debbie Watson, Barry Barnett, Melanie Picknell, Howard Tillwach and Mark Veck joined us in August and under the watchful eye of Steven Pannell, who acts as Park & Ride Co-ordinator, were trained in the art of customer care. Part of this involved Stagecoach Hampshire Bus as the first company in Hampshire to use the "Welcome Host" seminars arranged by the various Tourist Boards and Steve now describes this in more detail.

"The seminar is designed to improve the quality of information given to visitors and tourists by highlighting and enhancing skills in communication."

"With the imminent commencement of a new Park & Ride scheme at Winchester (won in the face of fierce competition), the timing of the scheme was perfect for the induction of our chosen Park & Ride driving team."

"We were also able to book places on the course for other key personnel such as Controllers, Standards Controllers and members of the Centralised Telephone Enquiry Unit. These key personnel were identified and represented the three depots comprising Stagecoach Hampshire Bus."

"The seminar was held at the Forte Crest Hotel, which is but a stone's throw from the main bus station at Winchester, and was hosted by Claire Strachan of the Southern Tourist Board. It was conducted by Mike Taylor, who had previously enjoyed an illustrious career in the bus industry. This background enabled Mike to tailor the course in a way that we could all identify with."

"The seminar comprised questions and "how to answer" sessions, together with the various role playing scenarios. The object of these exercises was to heighten awareness and develop the communication skills needed to provide more than just basic information."

"To summarise, the seminar was an extremely useful experience and not only did all participants come away with a better understanding of the tourist industry generally, but their individual abilities in providing quality information to the customer had been significantly enhanced."

Some of those participating were due to be presented with their certificates at a launch of "Welcome Host" in the presence of Viscount Astor, Minister for Tourism, at the Guildhall, Winchester on Tuesday 22 November 1994.

IMPROVING PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN HAMPSHIRE

Park & Ride is just one part of the active role Stagecoach - Hampshire Bus is playing in the field of public transport in Winchester. Upgraded and more frequent services in the city are already attracting greater patronage with passengers numbers more than 5% up on last year. We continue to work closely with the local authorities to prove the bus is a viable alternative to the car.



So, has the pacemaker rather than by-pass surgery worked? Well, Canterbury has always been a place of prayer and a few words in St Thomas' ear might be well timed in the hope that congestion has been alleviated. Ironically, the city's traffic management system may even now be a victim of its own success, with more spaces drawing in more people. Still, our buses have got into the spirit of things, with both the Optare Deltas and the Berkhof-bodied, low floor, Dennis Lances all sporting a kneeling facility, which is in constant use. The Berkhofs (replacing the originally planned Wrights) provide a flat floor for two-thirds their lengths, with facilities for wheelchairs. The entrance step drops to allow mothers to push buggies straight on board without having to unload baby. Just how welcome is this facility was clear when watching a mum boarding a Pickwick B10M, which had been substituted for a Berkhof to allow it to be used at the opening ceremony. Faced with the steps, the buggy was swiftly folded - with two blue booties sticking out! I thought I had just witnessed the first foldaway baby when I realised it was only baby's toy.

To aid access further, a ramp can be pulled out, an important aid to mobility. Of course, added complexity can produce teething troubles. The Berkhof due to be used for the opening ceremony took this prayer thing to the extreme. Wrongly configured, the bus not only knelt at the front but at the back as well, then stubbornly refused to get up again. Poor Engineering Manager (Thanet), Paul Denne, will forgive me when I report his dismay at the grinding noise he elicited from the vehicle as Brian Cox and I were piloted in from Sturry. Looking in his mirrors he knew he had hit nothing - nothing except the road surface, as the Berkhof engaged in a self-inflicted head banging session. Finally re-establishing full ride height, we proceeded to a very successful launch, at which we all received our pilgrimage badges reading 'Canterbury Park & Ride 2'. A third site will come on tap, probably in about another three years' time but, for now, those drivers using Wincheap and Sturry Road know that £1 in the collection box avoids the purgatory of the queues for the central car parks. Used to its maximum capacity, the roads in the City will be less congested and enhance Canterbury's prosperity.

Thus the Canterbury Tailback, but what of Winchester?

BUSINESS

Peak Practice Makes Perfect

Some of Stagecoach East Midland's operating area straddles the scenic Peak District National Park and Stagecoach buses are fairly familiar sights to people in the Derbyshire Dales. Sharp-eyed viewers of the "Peak Practice" television series will also have spotted our buses on more than one occasion on the programme.

The series itself has been an enormous success and Stagecoach East Midland has once again been assisting filming, this time for the third series due to be screened in Spring 95. Although there are also several other bus companies in the immediate area, the television production company always insists on using the quality vehicles Stagecoach provide.

Although East Midland serve various places in the area, even they don't manage to operate to the mythical peak village of Cardale, where the series is set (well only on filming days anyway).

For Chesterfield driver, Alan Wall, the latest filming session gave him the opportunity to make his television debut. Alan thoroughly enjoyed watching the way a television programme is actually filmed at first hand but wasn't too sure about the make-up!!

It was interesting to note that the scenes involving our vehicle only took up to three takes to get "in the can", whilst other scenes involving professional actors were taking up to twenty. Maybe this was for us, a case of a little practice making perfect!



Above: Shooting a market place scene for Peak Practice.



Above: Nothing in the fare book about half-fare for film crews.

DEVELOPING OUR MARKETS

Services to Lancaster University continue to be expanded by Stagecoach Ribble. An ever growing trade is developing, following a complete re-vamp of fares and routes over recent years, backed by high profile marketing.

Traditionally, the University Campus was served by an extension to a local bus route, which meandered through residential areas en-route, on relatively high fares.

The arrangement was targeted for a complete shake up, and in early 1992 UNI SPRINT was born. Following consultation with student bodies and University authorities a new service was launched, running direct from Lancaster City Centre to the University every 20 minutes, operated by two dedicated minibuses. These were painted in a distinctive black and gold livery. At the same time, fares were cut and a range of student season tickets, Unicornomy, was introduced.

The following year, after a further cut in fares to around half previous levels, the routes had proved so successful that the minibuses had to be replaced with two black and gold liveried Olympians and a Leyland National, the third vehicle introduced to operate an extension of the route to Morecambe. Twelve months further on and more developments have been introduced - an increase in frequency from every 20 to every 15 minutes, an extension to Lancaster's railway station and services running until nearly 2.00am at weekends.

"The University trade is very important to us" said Stagecoach Ribble's Traffic Manager, Trevor Roberts. "We go to great lengths to make students aware of what we offer, encouraging them to buy season tickets in advance, by targeting promotional literature to them via the University's mailing lists. We promote our services at the

Fresher's Fair and have very close links with the Student's Union".

The success of the story is self evident. "We carry up to 23,400 passengers each week in term times to and from campus", continued Trevor Roberts. "Just try to catch a bus from the University on a Friday evening during term time, even the duplicates are full!"



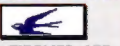
Above: UNI SPRINT buses with Lancaster University backdrop.

Ties & Badges For Sale

THE FOLLOWING COMPANY TIES ARE AVAILABLE AT £4 EACH (POSTAGE INCLUDED):

INVERNESS TRACTION,
BLUEBIRD BUSES &
STAGECOACH SCOTLAND

**NEW THIS ISSUE
STAGECOACH GLASGOW**



ENAMEL BADGES & TIECLIPS, ARE AVAILABLE AT £3 EACH (POSTAGE INCLUDED):

A) RECTANGULAR BLUEBIRD BADGE
B) OVAL BLUEBIRD BADGE
C) BLUEBIRD TIECLIP

CHEQUES OR POSTAL ORDERS TO
KAREN BRUCE
BLUEBIRD BUSES, GUILD STREET,
ABERDEEN AB9 2DR

Vanguard On The Move

Stagecoach West subsidiary, Vanguard Coaches, has left its Bedworth base. It has moved operations to Midland Red's Newtown Road depot in Nuneaton.

The move took place on Sunday 23 October and was stage managed by Traffic Manager Tony McKenna and his team from Vanguard. The move which included 28 vehicles, 31 drivers and 8 others went very smoothly and by Monday morning the transition was just about complete with all the duties now operating from the new base. Vanguard will continue to operate independently of Midland Red. However, they will now come under the control of Michael Herdman the Area Manager North. The main purpose of the move is to improve efficiency and fully utilise the resources at the large Newtown Road depot.

Midland Red Managers Reshuffle

The knock-on effect of the Vanguard move to Nuneaton has resulted in a number of management relocations. Vanguard Traffic Manager Tony McKenna returns to his old stamping ground at Leamington Spa. Leamington garage manager Joe Roper has returned to Rugby and Rugby garage manager, Matt Callow, has moved upstairs, so to speak, as he takes up his new position as Traffic Officer and joins the commercial office team at Rugby Head Office. Matt will be assisting Commercial Officer, Dave Matthews.



Infant Invasion

Ashfield Infants School in Workington have for many years undertaken a visit to Workington Bus Station and Depot, as part of a Transport project, September 1994 being no exception. This year, Mrs. White, the senior teacher asked if 77 children could visit the Depot. We felt this could be a little bit too many children at once, so the trip was spread over two days.

The children aged 5 and 6, visited the Bus Station Travel Shop, and saw the drivers' coin counting machine in use. Then we took them up to the depot where they saw buses going through the wash, having the chassis cleaned and brakes tested.

The children all behaved impeccably, and afterwards drew cards to thank Dave Moonie (Depot Engineer), Tony Chafer (Garage Foreman) and

Andrew Anderson (Operations Manager) for showing them round the premises.

Sadly Mrs White is retiring after this year, but the school have promised to visit again next year.

Special thanks go to Workington driver, Geoff John, for participating in the song "The Wheels on the bus go round and round", by providing sound effects for "The Horn on the bus goes peep, peep, peep!"

Above: Some of the children being deafened by the noise of the chassis wash in action

Below: Some of the pupils staff and parents of Ashfield Infant School, together with Andrew Anderson and Dave Moonie.



PEOPLE



KING M.J. NYAMBALO

We are not talking purely in terms of Royalty, but of a king in the art of KWASAKWASA in Malawi.

Kwasakwasa, a popular dance from East Africa, has spread all over Africa, like a bush fire and Malawi has not been spared the heat - Stagecoach Malawi in particular.

King Nyambalo, 46 years old, might sound old but when he is on the dance floor (aisle of the bus) he might be taken for a teenager. There is no step he has not mastered in the "KWASAKWASA" book of tricks.

When he is on duty, (especially those that are long distance and require two drivers) is when he chooses to entertain his customers, since most, if not all long distance buses, have music. When he is performing, passengers are reluctant to disembark, wanting to stay on board, even to pay extra for the additional fun. Many passengers even try to plan their journeys according to the "KING'S" schedule.

He was crowned king when on a countryside tour with his ZIKHALE Kwasakwasa Troupe, in which he is popularly known as "ABABA" which means father. Keep on dancing King Nyambalo - our customers love you!



Safety Award

Jim Telford, Projects Manager for Stagecoach Scotland, is seen here being presented with a Construction Site Managers Safety Certificate by Group Clerk of Works, Brendan MacKinnen.

Jim recently completed a six week day release course with the Construction Industry Training Board, on all safety aspects relating to construction.

Brendan MacKinnen said: "It is of the utmost importance that we keep abreast of current regulations and not become complacent. So far our department has 100% safety record and it is intended that all staff will eventually be certificated."

Wedding Bells

Shirley Hammell (formerly Jones) was married recently at All Saints Church, Cockermouth.

Shirley who now works in Cumberland's Central Telephone Enquiry Unit had previously worked for a number of years with the Company as a hostess on the National Express Services. Our best wishes go to the couple for a long and happy life together.

United Counties' Old Time

On Friday 7 October 1994, seventeen long-serving staff of United Counties, together with their partners, gathered at the Heyford Manor Hotel near Northampton to receive awards in recognition of their long and loyal service.

The Company's Chairman - Barry Hinkley - presented the awards after a most enjoyable four course dinner. Between them, the recipients had clocked up a massive 475 years service and are to be congratulated on their achievements.

Cumberland Award Long Service

Stagecoach Cumberland held its 1993 Long Service Dinner at La Primavera, Keswick on Friday, 23 September 1994.

A total of nine staff were eligible for the awards for 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45 years of service.

The presentations were made by Stagecoach Cumberland's Chairman, Mr W B Hinkley.

Awards this year were presented to:

45 Years - Mr M S Telfer, Coach Builder, Lillyhall

40 Years - Mr J Sanderson, Ex-Cash Clerk, Whitehaven

35 Years - Mr R Bateman, Driver, Carlisle Mr G Bray, Driver, Carlisle Mr A Richardson, Storekeeper, Lillyhall

30 Years - Mr T D Ferguson, Driver, Carlisle Miss E Moffat, Driver, Carlisle

25 Years - Mr G R John, Driver, Workington Mr P Maughin, Shift Fitter, Carlisle

DEATHS

It is with regret that Stagecoach Malawi learnt of the death of ALEX KUSELI, Chief Security Officer, after a short illness. Mr Kuseli joined the Company in 1990 retiring from the Malawi Police Force where he travelled extensively as part of the President's personal security unit. He will be sadly missed by all in Malawi.

MR KEITH HANCOCK, a driver with Stagecoach West's Swindon & District, died suddenly on 8 October 1994. His employment with the Company had spanned 30 years and was particularly sad in view of the fact that he was shortly to have got married. Keith will be remembered as the depot's Father Christmas and he will be sadly missed this year.



WAR-TIME GENERAL MOTORS' LORRY PRESERVED

There's nothing Lee Gribble, running shift fitter at United Counties' Bedford depot, likes more than to get away at the weekend with his G.M.C. former army vehicle.

Lee's G.M.C. is almost entirely original, with just the cab and cargo canvasses being constructed from replacement material, but made authentically, using the manufacturers original drawings. The G.M.C. 6x6 dates from 1943, when it was shipped from the States to England and sent to Europe at the time of the D-Day offensive. The vehicle thereafter, stayed with the Norwegian Army until it was disbanded and a friend of Lee's brought it back from Norway.

Since that time, it has appeared in two films prior to Lee buying it from his friend about two years ago. Lee takes the G.M.C. out to rallies or for short runs most weekends, to keep it in good running order, as vehicles can soon deteriorate if not regularly used. For the technically minded, the G.M.C. has a six-cylinder petrol engine; has five forward/1 reverse x 2 gears and does 8-10 m.p.g on the road or, off the road, manages 3 m.p.g or less. If any reader of "On Stage" would like to fill it with petrol, Lee will be only too pleased to let them!

Above: Lee Gribble's impressive G.M.C. 6x6 down in the woods.

RETIREMENTS



JEAN'S LOVE AFFAIR WITH BUSES LASTS HALF A CENTURY

Midland Red Leamington Travel Shop Clerk, **JEAN FREW** leaves after a total of 51 years service in the industry.

After an incredible "lifetime" of working for Midland Red and Stratford Blue, Jean is at last hanging up her pen, so to speak.

NORMAN ROBERTSON

Driver **NORMAN ROBERTSON** of Stagecoach Western's Whithorn depot retired on 18 October 1994. Norman started with the Company on 29 October 1951 and had almost completed 43 years service. A retirement function was held in Port William and Norman was presented with a remote control portable television by George Connell, Traffic Manager. We all wish Norman, whose hobbies are caravanning and bowling, a long and healthy retirement.

CARLISLE SAYS GOODBYE

Thanks and appreciation go to Drivers **BOB BYERS**, **JOE THOMPSON** and **JOHN VAREY** from Carlisle depot, who have all recently retired, and amassed between them an unbelievable 104 years service with Stagecoach Cumberland in Carlisle.

All the very best in your retirement lads!



FOND FAREWELLS FROM FIFE

BRIAN OAKES of Fife's Kirkcaldy Depot retired in July after 14 years with the Company. Brian joined the industry in July 1953 at the Rugby garage of Midland Red. A function was held at Guardbridge Bowling Club to mark the retirement of **JACK DICKSON** after 21 years service and **DUNCAN MITCHELL** 10 years service. Both were presented with gift vouchers by their colleagues.

GEORGE WOOD a driver at Kirkcaldy depot, retired in August after 6 years; **ARTHUR MOWATT**, mechanic at Aberhill depot, retired in September after 29 years; **JOHN YOUNG** a driver at Dunfermline depot, retired in October after 30 years.

Best wishes to all for a long a happy retirement.

AFRICAN DEPARTURES

Kenya

G S SETHI, Depot Superintendent, Nairobi retired in July after 39 years service. **EUCLID DA GAMA**, Group Internal Auditor retired from Stagecoach International Services, Kenya branch in June after 20 years service.

Malawi

R MBALUME, driver, after 41 years, **F MPINGO**, Depot Supervisor, after 34 years, **J MPHELP**, Traffic Inspector, after 21 years and **G NACHANJE**, a driver after 22 years of service with the Company.

A long and happy retirement to all.

SOCIAL



Showbus 1994

Swindon & District's Olympian fleet number 101 won the award for the best bus in its class (1980-89 double deckers) at Showbus 1994. It is a credit to Swindon depot and particularly to those who were involved in preparing and entering it.

The award was won in the face of competition from other bus operators, including other Stagecoach subsidiaries.

Above: Vehicle 101 in the Wiltshire countryside the day after its victory at Showbus

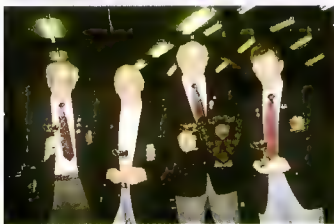


Above: John Nesbit receiving the winner's cup, stuffed with £50 notes, from Jim Moffat.

The main encounter took place on Sunday afternoon at Markinch Battlefield. Unfortunately, on arrival, the duelling area was under water and a minor skirmish in the ancient art of domino playing took place, ending in a win for the English rebels, who apparently used their notorious seven-spot dominoes. After about two hours the sun shone, the area was fit for battle and a thrilling encounter resulted in a win for the superior Bedford sassenachs.

The trophies were presented by Fife's Managing Director - Jim Moffat - during a terrific evening of dancing and merrymaking, laid on by the Scots. The evening was rounded off by the playing of the dreaded bagpipes by Sandy Imrie, to the delight of the English, who are pleased to say they have no instruments to equal them.

The English touring party wish to thank all officers and kilted warriors of Thornton and Markinch Bowling Clubs for their friendship and hospitality throughout the weekend and they are already looking forward to thrashing the Scottish Teams on English soil next year.



Visitors Take Home Cup

Teams from Ribbles' Clitheroe and Blackburn depots recently entertained rival footballers from north of the border in a friendly 7 a side tournament.

After a round robin competition, the final was contested between Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath, with Cowdenbeath returning home with the trophy.

The lads at Ribbles would like to thank their counter-parts for an enjoyable day and a good night out in Blackpool.

Battle Of The Bowls

On Saturday 27 August 1994, a raiding party of Sassenachs from United Counties' Bedford garage, led by John Nesbit, crossed the border to do battle with the Scottish adversaries from Kirkcaldy, Fife, commanded by Bob Grant and Ian Lang.

The first encounter took place at the Thornton Bowls Club on Saturday evening when, to give the Scottish Team a little encouragement, they were allowed to win by the slightest of margins, although the English more than held their own in the bar and on the dance floor afterwards.

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Super Bowlers

United Counties Bowls Team got the indoor season off to a great start when the team took part in the P.C.V. indoor bowls competition at Thornfield Bowls Club, Rugby on Saturday 18 August 1994.

The United Counties Team comprised, John Nesbit, Peter Ward and Sam Allison from Bedford, together with Bob Cole from Kettering and these four sturdy bowlers won all six matches and the competition. It was particularly gratifying to see old adversaries, Oxford Bus, pushed into third place.

Above Left: The victorious United Counties Bowls Team win the cups and Shield. On the strength of this success, the team are reputed to have ordered six new trophy cabinets!

If At First You Don't Succeed

Stagecoach Malawi Limited football team failed to reach the paid ranks of the Napolo Social Football Tournament which was played during the weekend of 4 and 5 September.

Out of the games Stagecoach Malawi played during the preliminary round, they only managed to secure a single point after drawing 1 - 1 and losing 1 - 0.

However, they went on to the quarter finals after one of the teams was disqualified as a result of fielding unregistered players.

Their luck failed to return as they lost both games 1 - 0 and 2 - 1.

Asked to comment as to why the performance was bad, captain Mike Butao attributed the poor standard of play to lack of training and that other teams were suspected of fielding "ringers", but he was confident that at the next tournament Stagecoach Malawi would win the trophy.



Western Scottish Ten Pin Presentation

Dumfries drivers, Andy Kirkpatrick (right) and Kenny Laidlaw (left) are pictured having presented Gary Gillespie and Louisa Montgomery with Ten Pin Bowling Shields provided by Western Scottish.

For the last five years, Andy and Kenny have taken groups of history pupils from Dumfries High School to York for study weekends. For a social break the students went ten pin bowling and Andy suggested that Stagecoach Western provided prizes for the best boy and girl. Area Commercial Manager, Tony Walmsley, was only too happy to organise shields which proved very popular.

Dashes' Eleven

It's often said that the travelling public in Carlisle have one of the best bus operations in the country. Unfortunately, the staff's expertise and enthusiasm in carrying out their duties does not extend to their leisure activities. In the first outing for Carlisle's favourite sons - no, not Carlisle United, but rather "Dashes' Eleven" - resulted in a 15-0 defeat. Rumour has it that Stagecoach Cumberland's Operations Manager, Carlisle, has put the whole team up for transfer! Any offers?

Kendal Drivers Gather The Trophy



Each year at the end of Summer, Kendal holds a fortnight of festivities ending this year on Friday 9 September as usual with the "Torchtlight Procession".

This year a group of drivers got together and decided to enter a bus into the Procession. The theme picked was driver Janet Neipokojczycka's idea of 'Save the Rain Forest', possibly because it always rains on the night. Depot Engineer Eddie Jones, agreed to the use of an Open Top Double Decker, and the use of a corner of the Garage to decorate it in. He was though noticed to pale considerably as a pile of camouflage and tree branches slowly built up.

The night of the Procession arrived and 2036 fully decorated trundled out to join the 80 floats laden with drivers and their families all in fancy dress, the drivers being dressed up as animals (not hard to do!).

After the Procession had made its way through the crowds around the Town and past the viewing dais at the Town Hall, our merry group were delighted to find they had won the Trophy for best commercial entry with over 50 employees.

Our congratulations to all.

CHARITY



An Even More Impressive Recovery Service at Ribble

In the September issue of On Stage, United Counties took great delight in "showing off" their Volvo F10 Recovery Vehicle. Well as usual Ribble is one step ahead with their very own, unique recovery service, "The Lancaster Sea Cadets" - pictured in their yearly Bus-Pulling event.



BARNARDOS APPEAL

Passengers on Stagecoach buses recently had the chance to donate to the Barnardos Giving Children a Chance appeal. Drivers Charlie Kidd

and Frank Cameron of Stagecoach Fife's St Andrews depot are pictured with the specially designed collection boxes.

HELPING OTHERS

At the beginning of September, James Crockatt of Fife's Aberhill depot, raised £417.20 after growing a "sponsored" ponytail which was then ceremonially removed. The money raised was matched by an equal amount from the Company and James is pictured with Fife Managing Director, Jim Moffat, at the presentation where the money was handed over to the Hyndhead Special Unit at Buckhaven.



1995 Stagecoach Calendar

NOW AVAILABLE AT
£7.50 INC POSTAGE

£4.00 INC POSTAGE TO STAGECOACH EMPLOYEES
(IN ADDITION TO COMPLIMENTARY ISSUE - A PHOTOCOPY OF STAFF PASS REQUIRED AS PROOF OF ELIGIBILITY)

CHEQUES OR POSTAL ORDERS
MADE PAYABLE TO BLUEBIRD BUSES.

TO: KAREN LAWSON
BLUEBIRD BUSES, GUILD STREET
ABERDEEN AB9 2DR

METAL-DETECTING FOR CHARITY

On Sunday the 2nd of October 1994, at 5.50am, the Victoria Cowpe UKRSA Metal-Detecting Rally's committee, which includes David Woodroffe from Ribble's Chorley depot, was already out and about, preparing to meet the expected throng of metal-detecting enthusiasts.

The weather was appalling, with bitter cold winds and heavy rain but from experience, the committee knew that the keen ones would come, despite the conditions.

Our team had adopted the name of a little girl with Rett Syndrome: Victoria Cowpe - and a sweeter little girl you couldn't wish to meet.

The land provided for our rally lay alongside the historically famous Chester and was on the site of a Roman Road.

With more than 80 prizes on offer, it was hoped that we would get a good turn-out. We were not to be disappointed. By 9.30am the car parking area was filled by more than 250 vehicles. From 6.30am the hot dog stall was doing some steady business: at 10am, it was ready, steady, go!, as detectorists in all manner of rain wear flocked on to the 300 acre site.

For readers not familiar with the hobby, the idea is to work as slowly as possible with the detector and to dig when a positive response is received. Before the event, a number of metal tokens has been buried. When found, the lucky finder had only to exchange the tokens for prizes.

SIGNIFICANT FINDS

In addition to tokens some natural finds also surfaced. In the first hour there was a Victoria military buckle, a gold ring, a miniature pistol and many old pennies, halfpennies and threepenny bits. During the rest of the day many other significant finds were made, including a Henry VIII groat, a Roman ring, a mediaeval sword pommel, an Elizabeth I sixpence and a broken axe head.

Searching went on all day until it was time for the prize giving and raffle at 4.30pm. Prizes included books, headphones, digging tools, a metal detector and a cheque for £50.

Victoria's mum and dad, who had already spent a couple of hours at the site, came back for the prize giving ceremony. Victoria's dad said a few words and received the fantastic sum of £2,400 to be put towards funding research into Rett Syndrome. I'll wager that there were a few lumps in throats when he introduced us all to Victoria, pictured with dad. It made us realise how lucky we are.

It had been a hugely successful day. A very special word of thanks was given to David Woodroffe, Chairman Preston Club, whose idea the whole thing had been. With help from the staff at Chorley depot, he has raised £4,500 so far this year.



SPONSORED STRIP!

Thanks to Stagecoach Fife, one of the region's most recently-formed young football teams are the proud owners of a new strip.

The youngsters make up the under-11 years Dalgety Bay FC, who are enjoying their first season of competition.

The club was formed by Gordon Donaghy, who wanted to offer youngsters the chance to play competitive football.

An approach by the team manager to Fife Scottish for help, paid dividends when the company agreed to sponsor the team strips.

Jim Moffat, Managing Director of Fife Scottish said: "We feel initiatives of this sort should be encouraged and we were very happy to help out."

Above: Gordon Donaghy (left), Jim Moffat and the young football players looking resplendent in their new strips.

LETTERS & COMPETITION

Dear Readers

Thank you once again for the contributions for this issue, keep up the good work.

If you have any comments or suggestions concerning the magazine, please do write to me.

The caption competition proved very popular, thank you for your entries, and yes, you didn't disappoint me, some were very definitely unprintable! See how you get on with this issue's unusual picture.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Janet Campbell

Editor

Dear Editor

With reference to Brain Teaser No.2. 5 C of the G? Are not the continents of the globe Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia (Oceania), Antarctica and America - a total of six. America is generally accepted as two continents - North and South - making a total of seven. A trick question indeed!

The difference between "die" and "dice" pales to insignificance when compared to a lost continent or two!

Geoff Simpson Kettering Depot

Geoff - what can I say! The brain teasers certainly caused a lot of controversy with readers. The caption competition is much safer, although I think there's something a little different lined up for the next issue....

The following letters praising our service and staff were received:

Dear Sirs

I felt I had to write to you with regard to an incident that occurred on Wednesday 31 August, due completely to a mental aberration on my part!

A friend and I caught a 700 bus at Portsmouth hoping to go to Worthing, but this was terminating at Chichester, there being no further connections to our destination. The driver of the 700, Controller Chris Pearce, kindly offered to take us to Worthing on the bus that he was using to take him to his port of call. There was also a lady and children at Chichester who had missed their connection to Havant and a bus was provided for them.

And they say chivalry is dead. Not on this particular day I can assure you.

The above arrangement was very much appreciated and I would like to confirm what a high regard I have for the 700/701 service. I use it five days a week for work and find it most reliable and the drivers always courteous.

With many thanks again.

Mrs A Repose, Lancing

Dear Sirs

I have recently returned for a week's holiday in Windermere. I drove there and then decided, on the recommendation of a friend, to buy a 4 day Explorer Ticket, cost £8.99. (From this you will gather that I am an O.A.P.). How pleased I am that I made that decision!

I am now writing to tell you that I consider that this ticket was excellent value for money. I went to Keswick three times, visited Grange, Kendal, Grassmere, Ambleside, Buttermere, Bowness and Coniston.

I saw far more of the countryside from the top deck of a bus than I would ever have seen from a car and was relieved of the pressure of driving.

I was also very impressed by the courtesy, helpfulness and cheerful attitudes of the drivers.

The buses were always on time and thus connections were easily made.

Many thanks for such a service.

Mrs J Moss, Cheshire

Dear Sirs

I have recently had a vacation in Lancaster during which time I used the Ribble bus services to go all over Lancashire and the Lakes. I want to say that you employ the nicest and most helpful drivers you could wish to meet, they were wonderful, very helpful and fun to ride with.

They played a big part in my enjoying my stay.

Thank you.

Catherine Rhodes, California, USA

Dear Sirs

I am writing to draw your attention to and thank you for the excellent service which I receive from your drivers and control staff on my late evening journeys from Pebsham to Hastings.

To clarify, let me tell you that I take service number 97 and require to connect with service number 21 to complete my journey.

Almost invariably, the driver of the 97 will radio to Silverhill to arrange a rendezvous at Warrior Square and facilitate an efficient transfer between services.

I feel that the drivers and controllers concerned deserve special note for their devotion to duty, which the staff carry out very effectively.

Please convey the thanks of myself and others who need to transfer between these two services.

P A Richardson, Hastings

Dear Sirs

I would just like your Company to know how much your 711 service (Brighton to Folkestone) is appreciated. To those of us without cars, our horizons have been extended no end. I am now able to visit friends beyond Eastbourne without the inconvenience of changing buses in the town; and I have enjoyed trips out to Guestling and Rye as well.

Your drivers work very hard to try and keep to time, and they are most courteous and patient with the passengers.

Mrs P Joslin, Eastbourne

The following letters (and many telephone calls) were received in response to the BBC2 programme "Southern Eye" transmitted in October in the South.

Dear Sirs

I feel after watching the programme on BBC2 re Stagecoach, I had to write a few words.

Since my husband died 8 years ago, I have used your bus service a great deal, it has been a life line for me, I know it must be for so many people. I have only the highest of praise for the good service you provide. I can go to so many places and when the 260 started going to Guildford, that was another bonus for me. I feel the BBC did not give a fair picture, it was very one-sided.

Sincere thanks to everyone at Stagecoach for a marvellous service.

Good Luck.

Helen Hastopp, Bognor Regis

Dear Sirs

I am writing to say I just cannot understand the dispute about your bus service - I think they are just wonderful.

I have been travelling on them since August 1st and I cant give enough credit for the way the drivers are so polite. It is so nice to have a good service. This is what is needed and hope you keep it up - seems to me the other companies are jealous.

Mrs J Carter, Bexhill on Sea

Dear Mrs Crombie

(Clerical Supervisor, Dunfermline)

This is a little note to say "thank you very much" for your co-operation in locating my son's violin which was left on X59 duplicate bus last week. My son and I are so happy and delighted that the violin has been recovered safely.

I would like to express how much I appreciate the way you handled this and am so grateful for your help and kindness.

My son has only recently started taking the bus by himself, and I suppose the fact that he was on a duplicate took him a little by surprise, so in his excitement or even apprehension, he left his violin behind. In these days of constant

complaints about service, I have to say that I am generally extremely happy both with the staff of Fife and the state of the coaches, but your helpfulness was by far the best service I have received. As a non-native of the UK (Japanese) I sometimes get a bit intimidated by the directness of some people, and of course English is my second language. However, you have restored my faith in the kindness of the Scots my husband is always telling me about!

With sincere thanks again from both my son and myself, I remain.

Junko Kawai Calderhead, Fife

COMPETITION

£25 goes to the person who suggests an amusing caption for our picture taken in Kenya.

All entries to Janet Campbell at the editorial address on page 2. Closing date 31 January.



The winner of last issue's competition was Derek Smith of Northampton with the caption: "It's not my fault your hair piece flew out of the window at Stowe Corner".

Other amusing entries were:

"Do the 'Go Faster' stripes make any difference" - Ian Harper of Cumberland.

"I told you not to drive so fast, he's been sick down his shirt now!!" - Paul Turnbull, Cumberland.

"If Mansell can keep to these latest running times then my drivers will have no trouble" - David Matthews and the Midland Red Commercial Office team.

"Probably" - M L Crisp, Northampton.

"At the rate we're taking over - East London today - Williams Team tomorrow" - Kathy Creevy, Debden, Essex.



And finally, a special mention for Maggie Kingston and H Stafford of Northampton - shame on you!

YESTERYEAR

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF ROUTEMASTER SERVICE

Stagecoach recently entered RM 682 in the 40 year celebration rally, held at the Royal Victoria Dock and Covent Garden Museum. RM 682 (originally WLT 682), first entered service from Wood Green Garage as a trolley bus replacement in 1961 and has since been re-registered HVS 937 by United Counties at Bedford from whom it is at present on loan.

The Vehicle was fitted out at Upton Park Garage in London with route 15 blinds. Route 15 operates from this garage with a peak vehicle requirement of 25 refurbished RMLs. They also operate and use in service the very last RML built, RML 2760, which has not been refurbished and is still in as new condition. Upton Park garage also houses two RMs currently being used in the Eastenders Soap, RM 613 and RM 1527.



A Look Back at the Kenya Bus Service

This bus is pictured in the 1940's leaving its depot. The depot, like the bus is no longer with us. It has been replaced by a very much more luxurious Hilton Hotel.

Have you noticed the cracked windscreen, how times have changed!

Pictured below is a modern bus





PORTFOLIONO6.

A breathtaking view of a Stagecoach Bus at work in Malawi